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Chacco, the Gallant Rose-breasted Cockatoo

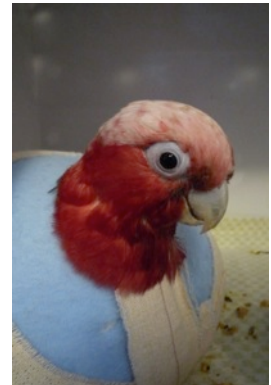
By Lucy Macmillan



When I first saw the photograph of Chacco, a rose-breasted cockatoo, on the Mickaboo volunteer message board, I was disturbed by the grim image of the poor bird slumped over in a hospital cage. He was being cared for at For the Birds, an avian vet clinic in San Jose, and was seen sleeping with a hospital collar over his head to prevent plucking of a healing wound in his chest. He also had a fabric sling placed around his body to secure an injured left wing. The image was heart breaking.

Chacco's owner surrendered him to Mickaboo in September 2014 because of his injuries and the owner's inability to pay for his veterinary care. The origin of Chacco's injuries, including open wounds on his wing and chest, is unknown and they were severely aggravated by his self-mutilation. Self-mutilation, in the form of repetitive pecking or plucking, can be an unfortunate but common behavior in many companion birds that may have been neglected or otherwise have developed behavior issues in captivity. Fortunately, Chacco was surrendered to Mickaboo in time to be medically treated with the hopes of being able to improve his quality of life.

Once in Mickaboo's care, Chacco was taken to a Mickaboo-approved veterinarian, Dr. Van Sant at For The Birds, for evaluation and treatment. Dr. Van Sant found Chacco severely dehydrated, with open wounds on various parts of his injured wing and chest. Chacco was in such terrible shape that surgery was impossible at the time of his initial evaluation. To control the pain, Chacco was given Butorphanol, a synthetic morphine, and Valium to help calm him.



Once Chacco stabilized, the veterinarians found that much of the tissue around his wing and keel bone injury was necrotic¹. He required surgery to remove the dead tissue around both areas. Chacco survived the surgery and despite the apparent grimness of his condition, continued to improve with expert medical care on a daily basis. Unfortunately, due to the extent of necrosis on his wing, it was determined that it would not heal and threatened his overall health. Chacco's wing had to be amputated. Thankfully Chacco recovered well from his second surgery and continued to improve.



While amputation of a bird's wing may seem cruel, Mickaboo believes that all birds are due medical care if that care will enable the bird to thrive and live a quality life, even if the bird will be a "special needs" bird for the rest of its life. Chacco, thankfully given that chance, is showing the resiliency that makes Mickaboo's determination to help birds like him pay off.

The costs for Chacco's medical care, including his surgeries, has run into the thousands. Please visit www.mickaboo.org if you would like to contribute to his veterinary expenses. All contributions are fully tax-deductible.

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¹ Necrosis is defined as the death of most or all of the cells in an organ or tissue due to disease, injury, or failure of the blood supply.